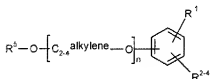


## IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended): [A] In a process for the preparation of an oligonucleotide which comprises the by assembly of an the oligonucleotide attached to a solid support, the improvement wherein the solid support is prepared by a process comprising polymerisation of a monomer which comprises a protected hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain attached to a polymerisable unit wherein the protected hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain contains from 2 to 10 C<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy groups and wherein the hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain is protected with an acid-labile protecting group, preferably an optionally substituted trityl a poly-aryl methane protecting group.

2. (original): A process according to claim 1, wherein the solid support is prepared by a ~~process comprising~~ polymerisation of a monomer of the following formula (4)



wherein

R<sup>1</sup> is an optionally substituted ethylene group;

R<sup>2-4</sup> are independently hydrogen, hydrocarbyl, halogen, or hydrocarbyloxy;

R<sup>5</sup> is an optionally substituted trityl group; and

n is 2 to 10.

3. (original): A process according to claim 2, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is para to the group of formula R<sup>5</sup>-O-[C<sub>2-4</sub>alkylene-O]-, R<sup>1</sup> is an unsubstituted ethylene group, R<sup>2-4</sup> are each H, the C<sub>2-4</sub> alkylene group is -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>- and n is 4.

4. (currently amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein the ~~polymerisation occurs under conditions to produce cross-linking~~ support is crosslinked.

5. (currently amended): A process according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is assembled by the phosphoramidite approach chemistry.
6. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is attached to the solid support via a cleavable linker.
7. (original): A process according to claim 6, wherein the cleavable linker is a succinyl, oxalyl or trityl linker.
8. (previously presented): A process according to claim 1, further comprising cleaving the oligonucleotide from the solid support.
9. (original): A process according to claim 8, wherein the oligonucleotide is deprotected prior to, concomitant with, or after, cleavage from the solid support.
10. (currently amended): A composition of matter having the formula:

Ps-Z-Q

wherein:

Ps represents a polymer obtained by ~~a process comprising~~ polymerisation of a monomer which comprises a protected hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain attached to a polymerisable unit wherein the protected hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain contains from 2 to 10 C<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy groups and wherein the hydroxypolyC<sub>2-4</sub> alkyleneoxy chain is protected with an acid-labile protecting group, preferably an optionally substituted trityl a poly-aryl methane protecting group;

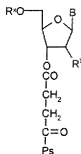
Z represents a single bond or a cleavable linker; and

Q represents H, ~~a protecting group~~, a nucleoside or an oligonucleotide, provided that Q is not H when Z represents a single bond.

11. (original): A composition of matter according to claim 10, wherein Z is a group of the formula  $-Y^2-L-Y^3$ , wherein  $Y^2$  represents a single bond,  $-C(O)-$ ,  $-C(O)NR^{17}-$  or  $-C(O)O-$ ,  $Y^3$  represents a single bond,  $-C(O)-$ ,  $-C(O)NR^{17}-$ ,  $-NR^{17}-C(O)-$ ,  $-C(O)O-$ ,  $-O-C(O)-$ ,  $-NR^{17}-$  or  $-O-$ ,  $R^{17}$  is  $-H$ , a substituted or unsubstituted aliphatic group or a substituted or unsubstituted aromatic group and L is a bridging group.

12. (original): A composition of matter according to claim 11, wherein L is a  $C_{2-4}$  alkylene group.

13. (original): A composition of matter according to claim 12 of the formula:



wherein  $R^x$  is an acid labile protecting group,  $R^y$  is H, F, allyl, OMe,  $OCH_2CH_2OMe$ , or hydroxy protected by a base labile or silyl-protecting group, and B is H, a protected adenine, guanine, or cytosine moiety or an optionally protected thymine, uracil or hypoxanthine moiety.

14. (new): The process of claim 1 wherein the protecting group is a trityl group, a dimethoxytrityl group or a 2-chlorotrityl group.

15. (new): The composition of matter of claim 10 wherein the protecting group is a trityl group, a dimethoxytrityl group or a 2-chlorotrityl group.